

THE FAIRFAX AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTS CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE APRIL 2005

Caregiver's Corner Online is an electronic newsletter produced by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program of the Older Americans Act. Our goal is to send you information to support you as a caregiver for an older adult.

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1. CAREGIVER SEMINARS. Are you a new caregiver for a parent or spouse? Do your parents live out of the area and you aren't sure what resources are available for them? Have you been providing care for a loved one for quite awhile but now need to make some decisions about getting additional help? Do you like to plan ahead? Are you concerned about how your loved ones are going to pay for long-term care services? Do your parents want to remain in the home they have lived in for the last 40 years, but you don't feel that is a safe plan?

If you can answer YES to any of these questions, the Fairfax Caregiver Seminar Consortium (FCSC) has the answer for you -- the Spring 2005 Series of Seminars for Caregivers of Older Adults. These FREE seminars are being offered at various times and locations throughout the Fairfax area. It's not too late to sign up. There are still several seminars you could attend. The feedback has been great from caregivers who attended the first four seminars. For all the details, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa. We are looking forward to meeting you at one of the seminars. If you have any questions, please call the seminar registration line at 703-324-5205/TTY 703-449-1186.

2. RESEARCH PROJECT STUDIES CAREGIVERS. You and/or your clients could receive up to \$85 for providing your feedback and opinions on a research study funded by the National Institutes of Health. The Oregon Center for Applied Science (ORCAS), has developed a new Web site to support working people who are trying to balance a job, family, and the needs of an aging loved one. The Web site (www.CaregiversFriend.com) provides advice on a range of topics such as Work and Home Balance, Talking with

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Family, and Illness and Change. NIH is funding a research study to test the effectiveness of the new Web site. Those who qualify will receive up to \$85 for submitting four on-line surveys. Each survey takes about 30 minutes to complete. To participate in the study, you must be juggling at least 10 hours of work per week, be concerned about the care of an aging loved one, and have access to a high speed Internet connection. All aspects of the study are conducted over the Internet. All names are kept confidential. There are no sales or mailing lists involved. To find out if you qualify for the study or for more information, visit the Web site at www.CaregiversFriend.com. Please share this opportunity with others you think might be interested. If you have already gone to the Web site and have other questions about this research study please contact Molly Billow or Ellie Price at caregiversfriend@orcasinc.com or call toll-free at 1-800-934-0626. Recruitment to participate in the study closes 5/1/05.

3. TEN WAYS TO GET YOUR MEMORY IN SHAPE, submitted by Ann Hunter, R.N., M.S. and Carol Fannan, R.N. from the Lincolnia Adult Day Health Care Center.

****Exercise.** Walking, dancing or biking for at least 20 minutes three times a week increases blood flow and the delivery of oxygen, sugar and nutrients to the brain.

****Eat a healthy diet.** Avoid sugar and saturated fat. Eat lots of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, spinach and beets. Think color when you choose vegetables. Sweet potatoes are not only for holidays. Eat them throughout the year.

****Learn something new.** Mastering activities such as a foreign language or playing the piano stimulate neuron activity.

****Get enough sleep.** Inadequate sleep impairs concentration.

****Devise memory strategies.** Make notes or underline to help you remember what you have read. Visualize what you are trying to remember. Visualization puts meaning to the object to be remembered and allows the creation of a mental picture that helps with later recall.

****Socialize.** Conversation, especially positive meaningful interaction, helps maintain brain function.

****Get organized.** Choose a route familiar in your home and place objects you want to remember along the route. Example is placing your pocketbook or briefcase near the door.

****Chunking.** To remember long strings of numbers break them into smaller more memorable chunks.

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****Jot down information.** Writing helps transfer items from short- to long-term memory.

****Solve brainteasers.** Crossword puzzles, card games and board games like Scrabble improve memory. Other games are good for remembering numbers (Concentration), spatial concepts (pinball, pool) and strategizing (chess and checkers).

Credit: "Mind Aerobics 10 Ways to Get Your Memory in Shape" by Susan Jacoby, AARP Bulletin February 05 and "Strategies for Memory Improvement in Older Adults" by Jane S. Saczynski, Ph.D. and George W. Rebok, Ph.D.

4. IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO APPLY FOR THE VIRGINIA CAREGIVERS GRANT PROGRAM!

The Virginia Caregivers Grant Program provides annual grants of up to \$500 to caregivers who provide unpaid care to a needy relative. Grants are awarded for care provided for at least six months of the previous calendar year. The caregiver and person receiving care must be related by blood, marriage, or adoption and reside in Virginia. The caregiver's annual income cannot be more than \$50,000. The Virginia Department of Social Services will only accept applications between February 1 and May 1 of each year. Applications postmarked after May 1 will be disqualified. To receive a copy of an application or for more information, please contact the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at 703-324-5485. Applications can also be downloaded from this Web site: www.dss.state.va.us/family/as/caregivegrant.html.

5. PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE NEWSLETTER ARE NOW AVAILABLE.

Current and past editions of the Caregiver's Corner Online newsletter (October through March 2005) are available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa/caregivers_corner_nl.htm.

****Please note that these items are included for informational purposes only and do not imply endorsement by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging or Fairfax County Government.**

For further information, please contact an Aging Information Specialist at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (telephone: 703-324-7948; TTY 703-449-1186 or e-mail: fairfax_aaa@fairfaxcounty.gov). Visit our website at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa.
